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# Middle East Bulletin

# TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST



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## Split in two? - The Turkish quest for identity

Jan-Hinrich Wagner

*Turkey is viewed by Muslim countries as leaning towards the West, while Western countries hold a different view, as was demonstrated by the latest comments of the French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Where does Turkey belong and how do its citizens identify themselves?*

The pre-election crisis in Turkey this summer, ignited by the ruling AKP's nomination of Abdullah Gul for the presidential office and the heavy military presence in the south-east of the country (100.000 soldiers at the border with Iraq), once again demands an insight into the nature of the Turkish psyche. Where do the Turks belong? How do they perceive themselves and how do they answer, directly or indirectly, to questions of identity? And are these indeed important questions for Turkish citizens?

Since the existing identity patterns did not come out of nowhere, the making of modern Turkish identity will be explained through two historical events. This type of analysis was used in order to account

for the dichotomy perceived to exist in the country. This fragmentation was created along the lines of tradition vs. modernity, Islamism vs. secularism, collective vs. individual identity, Islam vs. Turkishness and, in the recent pre-election period, even white Turk vs. black Turk. The mere simplicity of this distinction seems to justify the following historical explanation.

The first event was the transformation of Islamic Turkic nomads into settled village farmers. This change was not voluntary and was met with a so-called "cultural resistance" by which the villagers tried to preserve their traditions intact. What's important here is that the collective identity was carried

from the nomadic through the settling era and was well preserved. The second historical event was the cultural revolution of the 1920's, when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk led the creation of the Turkish republic. This cultural revolution, influenced by French and German nationalism as well as the ideas of the Enlightenment, brought about the sudden need for an individual identity - the identity of a national Turk. The effort to build a distinct identity did not affect the majority of the population at the time, which was still used to the collective organization of identity on the basis of clan and village loyalties and of the Ottoman classification system along religious lines. Thereby, the Kemalists' ideas initially had a limited impact, restricted mainly to the elite. The individual freedoms flourished to a greater extent in the cities and were expected to later spread to the periphery. From the cities came the well-educated entrepreneurs, who further fostered the development of an individual identity within the framework of capitalist market economy. This was the case predominantly in the west of the country, since due to a lack of infrastructure the east was mainly excluded from this development. The later initiated migration from the general periphery, especially from the eastern parts, to the centre, resulting from the thriving industrial sector's need for workforce, could have laid the conditions for the creation of an individual identity for greater parts of the society. Nonetheless, this did not happen, mostly due to a phenomenon that came to be known as *gecekondu*, meaning houses 'built during the night'. These slum-like settlements were made of simple huts, erected during night-time to avoid eviction on legal grounds the following day. These settlements and their inhabitants, coming from the periphery, ultimately led to a 'ruralization' of the cities, meaning that the latter became more like huge villages than anything else.

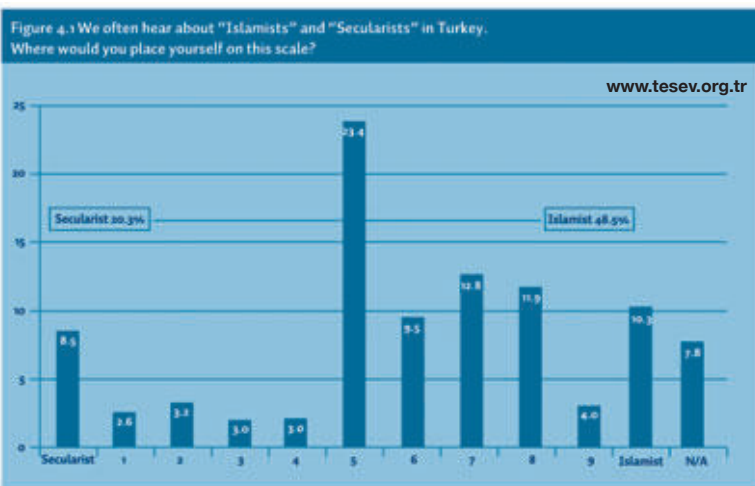
This explanation clearly runs along the lines of the aforementioned dichotomist approach. It blanks

out the fact that the vast majority of the population had insufficient access to resources on all levels.

Nevertheless, the majority of modern Turkish citizens have been exposed to the Kemalist ideal of a national Turkish identity through three channels: the official state media, the schooling system and the three military coups. All these have made clear to the population what is expected of them: a combination of western rationalism and eastern spirituality - as formulated by Mustafa Kemal and taught in schools. On the other hand, the six fundamental principles of the Kemalist ideology (Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Statism, Secularism and Revolutionism/Reformism) are rather contrary to the spiritualism proposed in the above formulation.

We will now see how all this has influenced the current attitude of the Turkish population. The 2006 follow-up study of the 1999 survey by the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) on religion, society and politics provides a thorough understanding. The dichotomy between secularism and Islamism not only still exists but according to the survey the gap has widened in the last seven years. The percentage of people defining themselves as 'very religious' or as first and foremost Muslim rose from 6% to 13% and from 36% to 46% respectively. On the other hand, support for a Shari'ah-based government declined dramatically from 21% to 9%. The best form of government in the eyes of the Turkish people is democracy (77%) without the army's interventions as a means of defending it (54%). Still, democratic rights are to be granted to Sunni Muslims rather than to followers of other sects (Alevites) or faiths (Christians and Jews).

As far as the secularism-Islamism divide is concerned, 20% identify themselves as pro-secular, 49% as pro-Islam and 23% stand in the middle. The much publicized headscarf issue, which was discussed very prominently and was said to divide the country, is rated far less important than, for exam-



ple, economic issues, suggesting that identity issues are not as important to people as they are widely thought to be.

The answers given with regard to the issue of the Islamism-Secularism divide can also be interpreted in another way, which is more connected to the results found on the headscarf issue and the preferred form of government. The group of people who were not able to identify with the spectrum of the survey's proposed answers, meaning answers 5 and N/A (See Table), make up for 30.2% of the sample. Moreover the 7.8% of no answer (N/A) itself was relatively high. If the central part of the spectrum is considered, meaning answers 3-7 (See Table), it is found that 51.7% of participants were not on the extreme ends, while the extreme positions, answers Secularist-2 and 8-Islamist (See Table), amounted to only 35%. Obviously, a majority of the answers can be classified in the moderate centre, something which connects to the other results better. This is also a good example of how research can be used to reach the expected conclusions.

In connection to the minorities it has to be pointed out that identification of members of these groups was hard to confirm, since e.g. the Alevi are

cautious about stating their identity openly. Nevertheless, about 11% of the participants were Alevi. Their answers were in general closer to those of Sunni-Muslims living in urban areas and having received a higher degree of education, that is there were mainly secularist and leftist. Of the participants who stated that they spoke Kurdish/Zazaki at home during childhood (languages spoken by the Kurdish minority and therefore serving as a marker for those belonging to this group), 57.4% identified primarily as Muslims.

As we can see, the dichotomist interpretation of Turkish identity, though justified and accurate in some aspects, does not suffice. The very complexity of the issue leaves no room for a simplistic approach. And it certainly does not explain why a fragment of the society, e.g. the leadership of the AKP, was at a certain point in time able to achieve an electoral majority.

Rather well depicted, though harder to digest than the survey presented above, is the political discourse as described by Yael Navaro Yashin, a researcher at the department of social anthropology at the University of Cambridge, in her 2002 publicised analysis 'Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey'. The researcher follows Turkey's public life in order to study political discourse in all its current forms. She argues that the term 'Turkish' was never originally used by the individuals it is attributed to, but it was a term that the Western powers used to label the citizens of the Ottoman empire, then adopted by the Young Turks and later by the Kemalists. Consequently, the author underlines, the search for an original Turkish identity would lead to a dead end. The author therefore tries instead, to follow the 'image' of the state, since this category seems not to be deconstructable. State, after all, has the power and the resources to construct ideals, identities and behaviours and this is a lesson well taught for the AKP's Islamists. ■

# The **AKP** & the **Kurdish** question: Implications for US-Turkey *relations*

**Veatriki Aravani**  
**Ilias Tasopoulos**

*While the U.S. is paving the way for a gradual withdrawal from Iraq, it seems that future developments in the Middle East will be decided by the regional powers. A major determinant of the final settlement, regarding the Kurdish issue, will be the social movement that shapes Turkish foreign policy.*

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One of the many consequences of the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) meteoric rise to power in Turkey was that it did not have enough time to crystallize its ideological platform regarding many issues, including the Kurdish question.

The AKP, created by the reformist and moderate wing of the Islamist party Refah, led by Tayyip Erdogan, seemed to have adopted its view on the Kurdish issue based on Necmettin Erbakan's beliefs; the Kurdish issue was artificial, created by the secularist establishment, which took advantage of it so as to confirm its special role in Turkey's political system. As late as 2005, Erdogan declared that focus should be given to the underdeveloped Southeast of Turkey, where the majority of concentrated groups of Kurds reside, with democratization being the only solution. In other words, he identified with the EU stance, as when the AKP came to power both the political edifice and part of the economic structure in Turkey had collapsed, following the 2001 financial crises. The attacks from Kurdish groups was not a major issue back then as, by 2002, the number of attacks had been minimized after the 1999 unilateral cease-fire from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which reduced the military's role in Turkey.

Under the pressure of meeting the EU Copenhagen criteria, the AKP had to adopt the four "Reform packets" dealing with the emergence of the first Kurdish language broadcast in Turkish history (in the Zaza and Kirmanji dialects) and the linguistic and cultural autonomy for the Kurdish people. The circumstances did not impose anything more, apart from declarations of general content.

However, the legitimacy crisis of the PKK leadership, led to a reactivation of the group with hard-line members taking the initiative. In addition, the PKK fighters found fertile ground in the region after the US invasion in Iraq in 2003, which made the northern parts of the country (and Mountains Qandhil in particular) more easily accessible to Kurdish militants. PKK militants seem to have also improved their tactics, learning from the Iraqi resistance: in the last two years, there has been an increase in the use of improvised explosive devices in their attacks accompanied by a decrease in the number of squad persons. The result has been an upsurge in Turkish casualties during the last two years.



After the attacks of the summer of 2005, the funerals of Turkish soldiers and militia members were presented as more than simple ceremonies to the Turkish public, fuelling reactions against the "Kurdish enemy". Analysts argue that, for the first time in history, the clashes took place at a grassroots level while some prominent intellectuals and ex-bureaucrats brought back the issue at the elite level. The AKP leadership witnessed the climax of the battle between the proponents of two opposing nationalisms, Turkish and Kurdish; in the meanwhile, the Turkish society was demonstrating its need to increase the feeling of security inside the country.

Up to that point, Erdogan pursued a prudent and studiously conciliatory policy towards the Kurdish issue, having as objectives the accumulation of real power in the interior and the promotion of

Turkey's EU membership. However, being pressed by the secularist opposition and the Turkish army to adopt a stricter "antiterrorist legislation", the AKP's stance was modified. Given that a large part of the party's constituencies were concerned that any such legislation would be used against them (they also rejected the prospect of strengthening the secular establishment), the AKP's critique was directed against the U.S.

Turkey criticized Washington for its support of the Kurdish entity in northern Iraq and especially for its seeming indifference towards the presence of PKK fighters there. According to the Turkish Media - a view mainly adopted by the pro-opposition NTV channel - the US broke the mutual agreement that American officers would arm Kurdish opposition groups in northern Iraq and then disarm them after the war under the supervision of Turkish officers. When, in the summer of 2007, American-made weapons were found in the possession of PKK fighters who were arrested by the Turkish authorities, the US was obliged to provide an explanation. Of course, apart from the possibility of American shipments reaching PKK through Kurdish factions in northern Iraq, there could be another route. Iran claims that the Kurdish Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK), whose fighters reside on the other side of the Qandil Mountains, is a recipient of American military equipment with the aim of weakening the Iranian regime. Today, PJAK shares many facilities and resources with PKK in the Qandil Mountains.

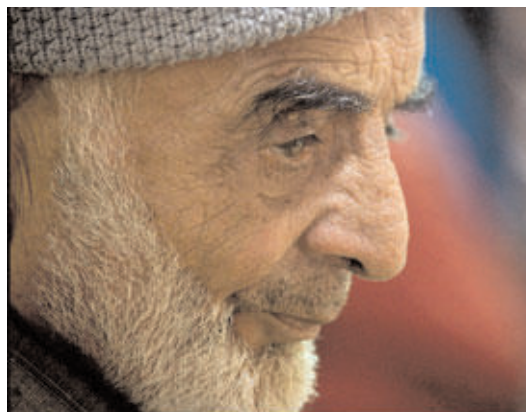
Members of the military, finding themselves more and more at odds with US policies, pressed Erdogan to adopt a more rigid stance. The military's influence on the public opinion was such that it even divided AKP voters. However, by building up forces on the Iraqi border and giving the impression of being on the verge of launching a large cross-border operation, the AKP evaded the pressure of the nationalists and the Kemalists. As the former Chief of General Staff, Hilmi Ozkok, argues, large-scale cross-border operations have a political value.

In any case, a long scale operation could have adverse effects after all. According to former Turkish military commanders, smaller units are preferable to large scale operations, when a state faces modern insurgencies. Unlike the past, the element of surprise is missing, when the Turkish Army attempts a massive operation, due to the activity of international news networks and the spread of communications. In the event that Turkey does attempt an invasion, the Turkish Army could face a lot of difficulties as it will have to deal with the little-known Iraqi terrain; a long march (at least 40 km) and a long occupation will be needed to "cleanse" the area of PKK hideouts. Additionally, collaboration

with Iran for a double attack against the PKK and the PJAK would be politically unacceptable taking into consideration the tense American-Iranian relations.

Apart from these considerations, the nationalists argue that there is another element which heavily influences AKP's foreign policy: Turkey's foreign dependence. It is true that there is a high GNP deficit of 8%, financed through foreign short and long-term investments, while an average 7,5% annual growth is interconnected with the increase in FDI to \$20 billion in 2006. This reliance on the EU and the foreign markets unsettles the establishment, as it further facilitates the rise of the more outward looking Anatolian bourgeoisie.

An invasion of Iraq might also estrange the Kurdish populations in Southeastern Anatolia, where AKP increased its support base in the recent elections (compared to the 2002 elections, the AKP votes in the pro-Kurdish regions increased by almost 25%), even though independent Kurdish candidates managed to secure seats in the Parliament, bypassing the 10% threshold. The AKP enjoys popularity in the Southeastern Kurdish region and is seen as an anti-establishment party with chances of acquiring real power and restricting the power of the Army; the successful campaign carried out by AKP deputies in the Southeastern region has uplifted the AKP's image. In any case, the Kurds in these regions are terrified even at the thought of a repetition of the 1991 refugee crisis and a revival of the clashes and repression against them which would probably follow a Turkish invasion in Iraq.



As was aptly described by a Turkish analyst, "... the AKP's discursive shift reflects both the demands and interests of its own constituency rather than being any tactical move designed to influence domestic and international opinion". The grassroots party organizations in Western Turkey, the municipalities controlled by the AKP, the Kurdish population in the Southeast, and the New Anatolian business class largely determine the AKP's stance towards the Kurdish issue in the region.

However, the end result of these multiple interactions could prove positive for Ankara; as Turkish newspapers seem to have concluded from the Bush- Erdogan meeting in the beginning of November, the US seems to have tilted towards Ankara's side, thus possibly consenting to a big Turkish operation on Iraqi soil (in the spring, before any new PKK operations could take place). The declaration of bilateral cooperation in the intelligence sector (something which is usually done without being announced) was meant to send a clear message to fighters operating in Iraq that Turkey has the support of Washington. However, it could also be a trade-off to avert the possibility of a Turkish intervention, triggered by future decisions of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq, and a "carrot" to Erdogan to calm the political situation inside Turkey.

It should be noted that a Turkish incursion in Northern Iraq might produce a chain reaction in the domestic political life, changing the focus of the social discourse from economic concerns to nationalistic fears or ambitions, strengthening the Kemalists, the Army and the secular establishment. This is something that the AKP leadership is probably aware of. ■

# Turkey and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A breakthrough in a story of tension and non-involvement?

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*On 13 November 2007 the Israeli President, Shimon Peres, and the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, gave a speech before the Turkish parliament. The fact that the Israeli and Palestinian leaders chose Ankara in order to meet prior to the Annapolis summit has led many to believe that something is changing with regard to Turkey's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict.*

**Panagiotis Geros  
Christina Prifti**

Turkey's stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict has for a long time been characterized by a strategy of non-involvement, notwithstanding occasional outbreaks of tension. Although Turkey is one of the three Middle East countries to have recognized Israel (the other two being Egypt and Jordan), so far it has not played a significant role in regional arbitration, preferring instead to stay aloof from the dispute. The lack of Turkish popular support for Israel as well as the assumption that Turkey could not have a meaningful intervention in what was essentially a dispute of the Arab world with Israel are possible explanations of this attitude. However, as the Palestinian issue is not the sole or the main source of conflict in

the region anymore, Turkey has begun to see opportunities for taking on a more active role in the greater Middle East. The problem of Kurdish separatism, its shared border with war-torn Iraq and the greater role that neighboring Iran claims in the area have of late brought about a shift in Turkey's policies in the region.

Turkey's relations with Israel date back to the period of the establishment of the latter but until recently they had to remain rather implicit. Even during the 1967 war and after the 1973 war - when the Arab states exploited the oil weapon - Turkey did not break its official relations with Israel. There had also been close bilateral cooperation in the 1960s and the 1970s, when revolutionary students' movements had attempted to challenge the authority of the Turkish state. Let us note here that in 1971 Turkish students assassinated the Israeli consul-general in Istanbul. It seems that in the aftermath of the Cold War (a period marked by increasing turmoil and a more assertive US role in the wider region) bilateral relations took a more overt and concrete form.

In 1996 Turkey and Israel signed an agreement for military cooperation, which has since been followed by many joint military, naval and air exercises with the participation of American forces. These moves provoked at the time the reaction of other Middle Eastern countries, which feared that the growing informal 'alliance' might

be turned against them. But there were internal reactions in Turkey by a significant part of the population as well. Although Turks do not have much sympathy for Arabs in general (they are regarded as back-stabbers for their betrayal of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War), the Palestinian cause has traditionally found many supporters among both the left and the religious right, while it always attracts the attention of the Turkish media and the mainstream. In any case, the official position of Turkey on the Palestinian issue is supportive of an independent Palestinian state that will be created through mutual negotiations and dialogue. Moreover, over 90% of the population opposed the US intervention in Muslim Iraq, an endeavour that the Turkish military elite were nonetheless eager to join.

As far as Turkey's relations with the Arab states are concerned, there are also signs of policy shifts. Turkey's Middle East policy (which for many decades developed along the lines of contractual commitments with Western states and Israel), and the strident secularism promoted by its military elite had given rise to an Arab mistrust towards Turkey. There had been even moments of serious tensions, such as the 1998 crisis between Turkey and Syria over a water dispute on their common borders. However, things started to change from 2002 onwards with the

coming to power of the Islamic 'Justice and Development Party', which initiated a new orientation toward the Islamic world. This was manifested through a greater rapprochement with Iran, a strengthening of economic relations with the Arab Gulf States, contacts with Islamic forces in Palestine, as well as a restructuring of Turkey's relations with Syria. As far as the latter is concerned, the change was rather spectacular. Following a long period of mutual mistrust, due to the intertwined issues of water and Turkish security (political circles in Turkey were suspecting that Syria was exploiting the Kurdish issue, providing refuge to PKK, in order to extract gains from Turkey on the water issue), the two countries signed a free trade agreement (in December 2006) and initiated a policy of mutual cooperation.

Thus, the emerging Turkish political elite seem to increasingly move closer to Arab concerns. Let us not forget that in 2004 the Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan repeatedly criticized Israel's policy in the Gaza strip, characterizing it as 'state terrorism', while he also temporarily withdrew his ambassador from Israel. In addition, Saudi King Abdullah's visit in Turkey (in August 2006) was the first one by a Saudi king in over 50 years. The growing involvement of Turkey in Middle East affairs was also reflected in its contribution of 650 soldiers to the peacekeeping and



restoration force stationed in Lebanon after the 2006 summer war (the first time that Turkey has dispatched its NATO soldiers to an Arab country).

The Arabs currently seem to need Turkey as a counterbalance to the increasing Iranian influence, while the emerging new 'Turkish political model' has become a source of inspiration for many in the Arab world. The way in which Erdogan and AKP aspire to reconcile the Islamic faith with political practice, the non-confrontational - but effective - way they are progressively restricting the political role of the army, and the spectacular economic advancement of a significant part of the population have attracted the interest of the Arab world. The

increasing role of mild Islamist academics, currently operating as Erdogan's advisors, in influencing Turkey's Middle East policy is significant in this respect, since it leads to a closer cooperation and mutual understanding with the Muslim world. At the same time, the economic relations between Turkey and the Arab countries have become stronger and Turkey's inexpensive consumer products are currently swamping the Arab markets.

Simultaneously, Turkey's new political elite is careful not to alienate its Israeli friends. Annual trade between the two countries now amounts to more than US\$ 1.5 billion, excluding the defense sector, while hundreds of thousands of Israeli tourists visit Turkey every year. Moreover, various agreements have been signed between the two countries, providing, among others, for the construction of power plants in Israel and the shipment of water by Turkey to Israel for the next 20 years.

All these moves require a delicate political balancing from the Turkish side, which apparently seeks not only to maintain close relations with both Israel and the Arab states but to also assume a more assertive role in the region. The background of these developments is being set by the political context that has formed in the region over the last years, which involves the increased presence of external actors. Thus, the

US is eager to appease the Turkish suspicions and discontent over Israeli interference in Iraqi Kurdistan, since it is now more than ever in need of a reliable ally that could act as an arbitrator to control the turmoil in which the region has fallen after the military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, the prospect of Turkey's accession to the EU means that this arbitrator could potentially function as a bridge between Europe and the Islamic world - or as a conduit for the problems of the Middle East in Europe, according to those who are reserved toward Turkey's entry in the EU. Furthermore, Turkey could potentially play an important mediating role between the Palestinian and the Israeli side on the issue of Jerusalem. Indicative of that potential role was the Turkish intervention in the dispute around the Temple Mount. Following the strong reac-

tion by Muslim Palestinians, who were afraid that the excavation work carried out by Israeli archaeologists would cause permanent damage to important Islamic Muslim monuments, the Israeli government allowed Turkey to send its own team and inspect the work conducted in the area (in February 2007).

The recent meeting in Ankara between the Israeli President and Mahmoud Abbas, ahead of the US-initiated peace conference in Annapolis, is inscribed in the political agenda described above. It has to be noted that during that visit the three sides signed an agreement, according to which Israel will allow Turkey to build two industrial zones in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank. However, how such a move can contribute to the building of an autonomous and viable economic structure for a future Palestinian state remains very unclear. ■



# The Turkish Stance *towards* Iran's nuclear program

**Aimilia Nathanail  
Madalena Papadopoulou  
Dania Paschopoulou**

*Since Iran launched its nuclear program, there has been concern in the international community, as this act was considered as a security threat. Iran's neighbors -including Turkey- do not want a nuclear Iran, as such a development could cause further destabilization in the region, However, they also wish to maintain good relations with Tehran. At first, Turkey stayed at the sidelines, but the US strategy seems to force her to choose between West and East. Which is it going to be?*

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In 2002 the existence of a uranium enrichment facility in Natanz -in Isfahan province, Central Iran- and of a heavy-water facility in Arak -in Markazi province, Western Iran- was revealed by the National Council of Resistance of Iran (a front group for the Mojahedin-e Khalq which has been on the U.S. State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations since 1997) evoking suspicions for an Iranian strategy to acquire nuclear weapons (enriching uranium is one of the final steps for the construction of a nuclear bomb). Those facilities were not declared to the IAEA and were mentioned to be parts of a clandestine nuclear weapons program. The Iranian government admitted the existence of those facilities but insisted on their peaceful purpose.

Turkey does not want a nuclear country in the region. Mustafa Kibaroglu, an expert on nuclear non-proliferation issues at Bilkent University in Ankara, said: "The bottom-line is that Turkey can't accept an Iran with nuclear weapons. A nuclear-weapons-capable Iran or a nuclear-armed Iran is not in the interest of Turkey". Moreover, when Ali Larijani, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, visited the country (8/5/2006), Turkish officials urged him to adopt more moderate and constructive tactics, so that a diplomatic solution would be found. They also said that Ankara desired a peaceful solution but she would support any Security Council decision on the issue, but it seems that Turkey is not prepared to go all along a confrontational path against Iran. Furthermore, they requested Iran's full cooperation with the IAEA and transparency in its nuclear program.

Agreements between Iran and Turkey, concerning the supply of gas and oil, compel Turkey to have a more conciliatory attitude towards Tehran. The availability of basic natural resources like gas and oil is a matter of national security. It is therefore imperative that Turkey remain active in the region and pursue further agreements in the field of energy (due to its rapid development, the demand for energy resources increases greatly every year. Currently, 60% of the country's overall energy needs is imported). So it is clear that Turkey has to preserve good relations with Iran. In 2006

the Turkish Ambassador to Tehran, Husnu Gurcan Turkoglu, stated that "... the Turkish government believes that the nuclear issue can be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy".

The most important bilateral agreement was signed in 1996, when Turkish import of \$20 billion worth of Iranian gas was agreed. In August 2000, the two countries signed a new protocol to confirm the terms of that deal. In October 2002 Turkey launched a second round of negotiations with Iran in order to enlarge their cooperation in gas transport. Another important agreement concerns the creation of a gas pipeline which is going to reach Europe through Turkey. Additionally, the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) financed Iranian gas production with \$3.5 billion, a major Turkish investment in Iran's natural gas sector, making the latter Turkey's second largest gas supplier after Russia.

Due to these arrangements, and taking into consideration the 1999 US Congress "Iran Sanctions Act" which warns sanctions against companies that invest over \$20 million to any energy resources of Iran, Ankara caused the indignation of Washington, which contemplated possible economic sanctions. As the newspaper World Tribune reported on September 7th 2007, "the United States has suggested that Turkey could come under sanctions for its energy cooperation with Iran". As the U.S. wants to tighten its policy towards Iran, problems might be caused to Turkey as well.

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Without naming Turkey, US Undersecretary for Political Affairs Nicolas Burns, announced that the US is against countries that allow their companies to get involved in oil and gas investments in Iran. Turkey, through Recep Tayyip Erdogan, defended the deal with Iran saying that no country can demand from Ankara to give up the relations it has with its energy suppliers. Also, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for International Affairs Abbas Araqchi announced (on November 26, 2007) that cooperation between Iran and Turkey would continue. He also said it is very important that Tehran and Ankara expand their cooperation especially in the energy sector.

Turkey took a step further in, what can be seen as the beginning of a nuclear race in the Middle East. Earlier this month the Turkish Parliament passed a bill allowing the construction of nuclear power plants amid severe objections from environmentalists and opposition parties- such as the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). "This is a historic moment. Our country will have long awaited nuclear power plants and technology with this bill," said Energy Minister Hilmi Guler.

Although Turkey does not wish to give up its pro-Western orientation, the center of geostrategic gravity has moved eastwards, as former Turkish President Suleyman Demirel noted on September 12th, 2006. The question is how the development of these new forces will change the balance of power in the region and affect the international order. Turkey has a tough decision to make: she neither wants to harm her close ties with the U.S. nor does she seem willing to risk the economic benefits resulting from her relations with Iran. As Yigal Schleifer of the major Turkish daily Zaman pointed out in an article published on EurasiaNet, Turkey, with its Islamist foreign policy, is driven by a desire to become a leader in the Islamic world. Professor of International Relations at Ankara's Middle East Technical University Huseyin Bagci once said: "Turkey wants to be a message-bringer from the Islamic world to the West (...) The government really believes that it can be a bridge between East and West and this is the foreign policy". In any case, according to BESA Director Pr. Efraim Inbar, the U.S. cannot persuade some states in the region, including Turkey, that they can provide a nuclear protection against a possible Iranian attack. That is the main reason why Turkey is under such a dilemma. Ankara does not want a neighbouring nuclear bully but, on the other hand, she could not afford ruining her relations with Iran at a critical juncture for the history of the region. ■

# Gurgle in the Background - Turkey, Water and the Middle East

**Giorgos Gregoreas  
Jan-Hinrich Wagner**

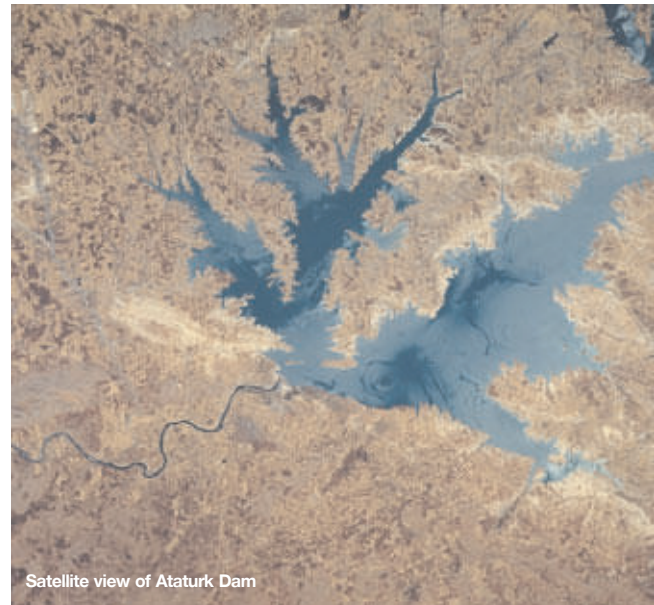
*The importance of water in the Middle East, though currently receiving minor attention, is crucial. It is bound to be in the background of nearly all matters pertaining to the region. In this article we will attempt to analyze the claims made by regional players and the ensuing implications.*

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**T**he Middle East is one of the world's most water scarce regions, while demand for this good is projected to rise due to population growth and economic development. Turkey holds a key position in this context since it controls the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. The two rivers run from the Turkish territory through Syria into Iraq (Euphrates), or directly into Iraq, after marking the Turkish-Syrian border (Tigris). Both countries are heavily dependent on these trans-boundary waters for their development, agricultural and power production.

The Turkish-Syrian relations were heavily strained in the 1990's: on the one hand, the support granted to the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) by the Syrian government had made Turkey threaten its neighbour with sanctions, and on the other the Syrians were very concerned with Turkey's Southeastern Anatolian Project (GAP), consisting of 22 planned dams on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in order to achieve uninterrupted flow of water to the irrigation projects in southeast Turkey and to exploit hydro power. Syria claimed that Turkey blocked the waters of the Euphrates from entering its territory in the volume and quality it demanded. While the dispute concerning the PKK faded after the arrest of Abdullah Ocalan, the water issue remains unresolved and is currently "frozen". After the AKP's rise to power (2002), steps towards

improving bilateral relations were taken, as manifested by the increase in bilateral trade (from \$257 million in 1992 to \$635 million in 2004) and in Turkish investments in Syria (\$150 million in 2006/07). The Turkish decision in 2004 to increase the water flow of the Euphrates into Syria and the current plans for a joint dam on the Orontes River (also known as Asi) further demonstrate the consol-



idation of relations, making room for a major agreement in the future. It is worth mentioning that during his visit to Turkey in October Syrian President Bashar al-Assad condemned the recent escalation in PKK activities, stating that what Turkey seeks in Iraq is self-defence. Turkish-Iraqi relations have been strained since the Kurdish dominated semi-independent northern Iraqi provinces serve as an operational basis for the PKK. The central Iraqi government declares its own security forces unfit to face this challenge, while Kurdish officials are primarily concerned with the attainment of unity in their territory.

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Baghdad has another concern with regard to Ankara, very similar to the situation in the 1990's between Syria and Turkey. Iraq is dependent by up to 75% on trans-boundary waterways coming from Turkey. Especially the Ilisu dam on the Tigris, which is being constructed since 2006 and is expected to be finalized in 2013, poses a great threat to a number of Iraqi projects. The dam is located on the Turkish part of Tigris river about 65 km from the Iraqi boundaries and according to the Iraqis it will cause immense problems, as the normal annual water amount of Tigris' flow from Turkey to Iraq will be reduced from 20,93 billion cubic meters to 9,7 billion cubic meters. The Tigris delivers fresh water to Iraq's two biggest cities, Baghdad and, further south, Basra, as well as to Mosul in the north. Furthermore the plan to re-irrigate the marsh lands in the South of Iraq is perceived to be at great stake. These concerns have been expressed by Abdullatif Jamal Rasheed, the Kurdish Minister of Water Resources of Iraq, as well as by the Minister of Water Resources of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG).

Another issue that can be addressed here only briefly is the discontent of Iraq with the quality and amount of water it receives from Syria through the Euphrates, though both countries are backing the UN Convention on the Law of Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (hereafter 'the Convention') in order to jointly face Turkey.

When in 1997, after 25 of preparations, the Convention was finally brought to the United Nations Generally Assembly (UNGA), 103 states voted in favour of it, while three against - one of which was Turkey. The Convention up to date has 16 signatories and 16 countries are member to the Convention, Iraq and Syria are two of these. At the core of the Convention are its Articles 5 and 7, demanding equitable and reasonable utilisation (Art. 5) and the No-Harm Principle (Art. 7). The Convention includes an obligation to notify all riparian states of any measures affecting a trans-boundary waterway and accepts the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as the institution to decide in cases of conflict. The only case concerning trans-boundary waterways ever heard in front of the ICJ, was in 1997 between Hungary and Slovakia, both not parties to the Convention.

The Kurds in Turkey have already suffered from the GAP to a great extend, since it was not only the war in the 1990's but also this project that uprooted 500.000 - 1 million people, making them internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Yet another dam is coming up in Ilisu. This part of the GAP will again make around 25.000 mostly Kurdish citizens lose nearly all their property and it is likely that in total 55.000 -78.000 individuals will have to resettle. The



mere fact that the majority of those affected by the project are Kurds does not exactly ease internal tensions; on the contrary, it puts Turkey once again on the radar of human rights organizations and could possibly influence Kurdish support for AKP policies in general.

The Kurds in northern Iraq are definitely interested in stability on all levels. Insurgency actions within their territory are a clear threat to this interest. The Kurdish provinces are the most stable, most democratic and foreign investment attracting in the whole of Iraq, serving as the US's favorite showcase. Since a huge portion of the foreign investment to these provinces comes from Turkey a clear dependency is established. As stated above, the regional government has to treat the PKK issue very cautiously since it cannot afford to risk the unity of this region.

The PKK as such is losing ground, since an independent Kurdish state is in the horizon and the economic situation in southeast Turkey has improved in recent years. Furthermore, the AKP has received a large number of votes in this region and 20 MPs of the Grand Turkish Assembly have formed a Kurdish fraction, after running as independent candidates in the election. This demonstrates that the Kurds have been able to find ways of representation other than through the PKK.

The PKK has threatened in the past to commit sabotage acts against infrastructural installations, though pipelines or dams have not been targeted so far. The Turkish forces are therefore very determined to establish security in the area.

This has to be seen especially in the light of the strategic partnership between Turkey and Israel, which is to be consolidated even further: the Turkish Minister of Energy Hilmi Guler and the Israeli National Infrastructure Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer have met in Ankara this October and expressed the two countries' intention to move towards the construction of a multi-purpose network of pipelines that will carry oil, gas, electricity and water. The route of the project will in all probability stretch underwater from Ceyhan to Ashqelon port to deliver water also to Jordan and the

Palestinian Territories, while it is not clear if the pipelines will also pass from the Turkish occupied northern Cyprus. Hilmi Guler characterized the network as an extension of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (B.T.C.) pipeline and stated that the preliminary feasibility studies have already been conducted and that a

draft of the schedule for the completion of the project has been prepared. Given though the history of unrealized talks and agreements over the transport of water from Turkey to Israel in the past, there are not loud Israeli statements as far as the progress of the project is concerned. Nonetheless, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer appointed in November a team of experts to promote the negotiations revealing thus Israel's will to advance with the plan which could ease to a great extent the country's shortage of water supplies. The project dates back in 2006 when the two countries claiming financial reasons, put into deep freeze the agreement they had signed in 2004 for the shipment of water from Turkey to Israel for a period of 20 years. ■

## Human Development Report 2006

[hdr.undp.org](http://hdr.undp.org)

- 145 countries lie within shared river basins
- Most disputes over shared waters have been met constructively and solutions were found in some situations under very hostile circumstances, e.g. the Israeli-Jordanian cooperation on the Jordan River in the 1950s under an official state of war
- The mutually productive use of rivers and lakes holds great chances for very positive developments on many levels, while an unproductive use can deteriorate developments considerably
- Out of 37 violent situations over water, 30 have been recorded in the Middle East (between Israel and one of its neighbors, ending in 1970)
- Water issues always interweave with other factors when resulting in international conflicts

# Turkish **Energy Policy** & the Middle East: Determining the nexus

Alexandra Karaiskou  
Rodoula Psylla

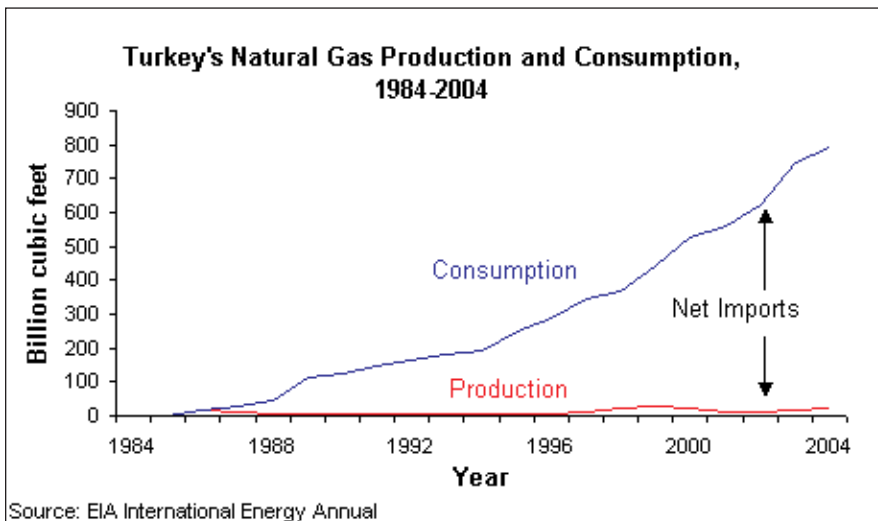
*Privatization and liberalization of the domestic energy sector paved the way to a number of long-term supply agreements that justify Turkey's characterization as an "energy corridor" bringing the Middle East and the Caspian Sea closer to and the Western energy markets. As such, Turkey constitutes both a destination and a transit country. Diversification of oil and gas suppliers and the multiple pipelines systems that cross its soil aim at ensuring the uninterrupted flow of energy in a politically unstable region.*

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**T**urkey's growing energy needs in oil, gas and electricity, due to its economic development that followed the 2001 crisis, as well as the insuffi-

ciency of indigenous production have prompt the country to pursue closer relations with Russia, the Caspian states and the Middle East, where 2/3 of the global oil

and natural gas reserves are situated. In fact, the country imports 60% of its total energy demand which is expected to rise by 10% in 2010 and come up to 80% by the end of the next decade. As far as oil consumption is concerned, its major suppliers, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia, the UEA and Libya, satisfy 82% of total domestic needs. Accordingly, approximately 96% of its gas consumption is supplied by its main partners, Russia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Algeria and Nigeria, among others. The increase in electric energy demand roughly by 5% per annum depends on the interconnection of transmission lines with neighboring countries, such as Iraq, Syria and Iran.



More specifically, it seems that Iran attracts Turkish interest for both its oil and gas. Indeed, Tehran provides Turkey with oil while it is considered to be its second largest gas supplier after Russia, as a result of 25-year deal signed in 1996, which officially came into force in January 2002, aiming at gas transit from Tabriz to Ankara. Considering the U.S. sanctions that deprive Iran from capital and technology flows, Turkey appears to be its alternative funding source in the energy sector. In this context, the Memorandum of Understanding of last July brought \$3.5 billion worth of Turkish investments to the Iranian South Pars gas field. Furthermore, the channeling of Turkmenistan's gas to Turkey via Iran and of Iranian gas to Europe through Turkey is included in the agreement. Moreover, Iran and Turkey have been negotiating with the Austrian energy company OMV AG in order to pump gas from Central Asia to Europe through the proposed Nabucco pipeline project, whose construction is scheduled to begin in 2009. Yet, Turkey is already linked to Europe through the Turkey - Greece Interconnector, which was inaugurated in November and is expected to be extended to Italy by 2012. It is worth mentioning that it is the first time that

Europe is supplied with Caspian gas bypassing Russia and the Middle East.

Apart from Iran, Turkey also depends on Iraq for its energy imports. The crude oil pipeline system delivers oil produced in Kirkuk and northern Iraq to Ceyhan, the southeastern Mediterranean port of Turkey. Since the US invasion, the pipeline has been operating only sporadically due to raids by Iraqi insurgents and sabotage attacks, e.g. those of June 2003 and July 2006 which caused temporary rupture of the pipeline. However, in 2006 alone 12.930 thousand barrels were transported, making Iraq one of Turkey's most important energy partners. Northern Iraq's importance to Turkey's energy supplies is

affirmed by the recent plans of the Turkish national pipeline company to extend bilateral partnership to the gas field in order to bolster Nabucco's supplies. Nevertheless, the existing tension in the Iraqi Turkish relations has had an impact on cooperation in the energy field due to the forthcoming Turkish economic sanctions against Iraq, which will include cutting off electricity supply to northern Iraq and imposing restrictions in the passage of construction material and food. In view of these sanctions, the latter has threatened to interrupt the flow of oil from Kirkuk, which will result in serious financial losses for Turkey.

It seems that the Ceyhan Marine Terminal is emerging as a crucial energy crossroad where



two major pipelines that cross the country, namely the Kirkuk-Ceyhan and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), meet. The BTC transfers Caspian oil from Azerbaijan to Turkey and afterwards to the world market. The pipeline's strategic importance is apparent, given that oil is delivered without passing through Iranian and Russian soil or other turbulent regions where it would be a prey to political turmoil. In other words, it serves as an alternative route for Caspian oil towards Turkey reducing Iran's transit role. At the same time, it facilitates the circulation via traffic-choked Turkish Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. It's worth mentioning that the U.S. appears to be supportive of the BTC. The same applies for the Blue Stream pipeline, through which Russian gas flows to Ankara via the Black Sea bypassing Iran. Among Russian intentions is the extension of the Blue Stream in order to carry gas to Israel and Southern European countries.

Ceyhan's role as an intersecting point is further affirmed by another project that envisaged carrying BTC oil to the northern Israeli port of Haifa. High cost and the Lebanon war thwarted the plans. Turkish-Israeli energy cooperation boosted in April 2006, when the two countries opened negotiations concerning the development of a four underwater pipeline system that would carry oil, natural gas, electricity and water from Ceyhan to the seaport of Ashkelon. Through the Trans-Israel Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline, part of Caspian and Central Asian oil and gas can then be rechanneled to Asian markets. Despite having been approved by both countries, the project's constructive cost turned out to be prohibitive. However, in October 2007, Turkey's and Israel's government officials started a second round of discussions over the plan's feasibility. Turkish Minister of Energy Hilmi Guler has stated his commitment to the project along with his Israeli counterpart, National

Infrastructure Minister Ben-Eliezer. For his part, the latter has set energy security as Israel's prime target. As operational and investment cost determination is under consideration, it seems that the project is still within reach.

Overall, part of the regional energy transit trade cooperation lies in Turkey's connection to the Arab natural gas pipeline, the so-called Trans-Arab pipeline, which distributes Egyptian gas through Syria and Jordan to the Middle East. In fact, in March 2006 a discussion among Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon took place concerning the possible extension of the pipeline to Turkey, which is expected to operate by 2009 and to be ultimately linked with Europe through Nabucco.

Through its complex pipeline network, Turkey has achieved its target of energy security. In addition, it constitutes an energy transit country and as such it earns transit revenues. Its crucial energy role has enhanced its regional status and has established Turkey as an alternative energy route. This is reflected in Europe's preference for energy imports through Turkish soil, in its effort to assure partners other than Russia, such as Iran or the Caspian states. The increase in energy demand renders necessary the diversification of energy suppliers and serves as the driving force for the completion of the proposed pipeline projects. ■



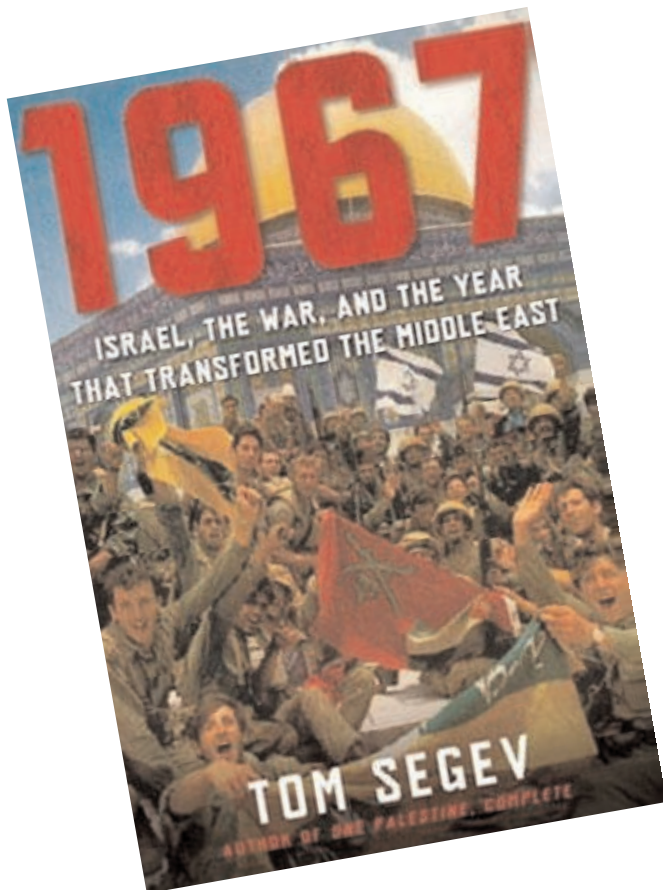
**Tom Segev**

# 1967 Israel, the War and the Year that transformed the Middle East

New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007

**Pinelopi Kafetzidaki  
Marina Tomara**

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*"The only thing we won was the war"*

The importance of the Six Day war of 1967 lies in the major changes it brought about not only in the Middle East but also in the entire system of international affairs. Apart from its direct impact on the Palestinians, it has also led to the birth of a new group of Israeli historians who have adopted a critical approach in their study of Israel's history. They are called Post-Zionists or revinsionists and Tom Segev is one of them. Although not all New Historians have uniform views, there is a point of convergence: the Palestinian refugee problem. They have opened a discussion on the very nature of the Israeli state, with a view to exploring ways through which it could come to terms with the Palestinians. Furthermore the New Historians

are racking up events and facts which were downplayed or suppressed by Zionist historians, in order to define the causes of the current situation. Accordingly, Segev uses a variety of sources, such as letters, diaries and interviews as well as Israel's official archives, and lets them speak for themselves. The most interesting fact is that he achieves to highlight the causes of the war not only through political and strategic facts but also through an analysis of Israel's psyche before and during the war.

The book consists of two parts. In the first part, the writer describes the daily life and culture of the Israeli people outlining the character of the State of Israel as it was formed from the war of independence until June 1967. Segev lays emphasis on the transformation of the new state's initial euphoria into a gradual debilitation. The economic crisis together with the increase in immigration and the inequality between Ashkenazi (European) and Mizrahim (Middle Eastern) Jews created disillusionment among the Israeli society. At the same time, a wave of Palestinian raids enhanced the feeling of being under siege. Eighteen months before the war, more than a hundred acts of sabotage were carried out in Israel by the newly founded Fattah movement. Moreover, various incidents on the borders between Israel and Syria created a permanently threatening situation for the farmers due to the struggle for access to the waters of river Jordan. Those incidents created the "Syrian Syndrome".

On the Egyptian front, Nasser decided to demand the withdrawal of UN peace keeping forces from the Sinai Peninsula and later on he blockaded Israeli shipping in the Gulf of Aqaba. Segev describes the confusion within Israel's political and military leadership on how to assess the situation. The interpretations vacillated between Nasser's intention to prevent an Israeli-Syrian war and an all-Arab war against Israel. Responding to that provocation, Israel warned Egypt that blocking the Straits of Tiran and the freedom of navigation would be a *casus belli*.

At this crucial point Segev writes the most arresting pages of the book in which he deals with those in charge of making decisions. He describes vividly the conflict over the necessity of the war. In the domestic scene, prime minister Levi Eshkol did not enjoy high approval ratings, not even within his own party Mapai, let alone among right wing politicians. David Ben Gourion, the charismatic founder of the Mapai party -the Zionist Labor Party- and first prime minister of Israel, accused Eshkol of irresponsibility for bringing Israel into the crisis, while Menachem Begin, the leader of the Herut party, was opposed to his hesitation to take action without US approval. At the same time, the military leadership was in favor of a preventive war. The result of that unstable situation was the formation of a National Unity government, in which the most hot-headed dominated. Since the prevalent view is that the war could not be avoided, the writer starts a count down of the weeks preceding the war, describing the key events. Segev argues that the war was not the result of political and strategic considerations but of a patriotic and religious ideology for a greater Israel that should return to its historical borders, as described in the Bible. In addition, the collapse of Israel's 1949 dream made the war the only option that could offer a way out of the decline.



The second part of the book describes the victorious war day by day and offers an insight into post-war Israel. The victory was followed by an almost metaphysical feeling of euphoria. Segev underlines the overwhelming impact that the conquest of the West Bank had on Israelis, seen as a symbol of the return to the land of biblical promise. Thousands of refugees, secret population transfer plans, the beginning of the settlement policy and escalating terrorism have been the war's aftermath. Segev, like all new historians, refutes the official position which states that the refugees fled the Jordan Valley out of their own will and he also criticizes the government's effort to conceal the real number of Palestinian refugees.

Detached from the events, Segev addresses a penetrating criticism against the Israeli leadership of the time which has largely contributed to the current dead-end. Though the six day war was a glorious military success, not only did it fail to upgrade Israel's position, but it also condemned it to a never-ending cycle of violence. Segev sums up the war's outcome for Israel in one phrase: the bitter taste of victory. ■



# A muslim kingmaker in Denmark

Jan-Hinrich Wagner

*Migration takes different forms and faces as can be seen by the example of the recent Danish elections, where a politician with a migrant background acquired the position of the kingmaker.*

Page 2



**S**ome outcomes take time to be revealed. In the case of the national and international dispute over the caricatures of Mohamed, published in Denmark and Sweden in September 2005, some of the social and political consequences can be seen in the person of Naser Kader. Kader, born in 1963 to a Syrian mother and a Palestinian father, was raised close to Damascus but emigrated to Denmark in 1974, following his father who went to Europe as a guest worker.

Kader ran as a candidate of the Social-Liberalist Party and managed to become the first Danish MP with a migration background. However, in early 2006 a cultural conflict broke out all over Europe and in the Muslim world, leaving a number of protestors dead and embassies torched. Kader could have behaved as an average MP, attracting media attention, serving as a symbol for integration and participation, going along with his party line and engaging in the usual activities of a back

bencher. But he did none of this. Instead, he seized the opportunity of the caricature dispute to present himself as a moderate, democratic Muslim, creating, along with other Danish Muslims, a platform of democratic principles.

Realizing that the Social-Liberalist party did not represent his views any more, Kader moved on to found his own party in May 2007, the New Alliance, which attracted members and donors from both sides of the political spectrum. Surprised by the announcement of early elections by Prime Minister Rasmussen, the new party took to the race for votes. The program of the party became famous for its liberal approach to immigrant rights, its promised reduction on taxes and

its demand for a complete Danish accession to the Eurozone. This put the party into direct opposition with the nationalist Danish People's Party, famous for its restrictive stance on immigration policy. Since the PM's liberal-conservative coalition is a minority government, it had to rely in the last years on the Danish People's Party. The party used its position particularly to influence immigration issues.

After the November elections, the New Alliance is bound to be a major headache for PM Rasmussen. Kader declared that he will support Rasmussen's government, but at the same time oppose the nationalists. Rasmussen will have to find a way to incorporate both parties in order to secure the necessary

majority of six votes in the Danish parliament.

This is a new step in Europe's struggle to come to terms with the changing social realities, especially those pertaining to the status of immigrants. The struggle over the caricatures, the discussion over headscarves in France and the building of mosques in Germany, the ugly incidents in the Netherlands - all these are symptoms of the same problem, which in the Danish case is now been taken to the level of domestic politics. ■



# Annapolis: Crossing the Abyss. *And Two Ideas*

**Sotiris Roussos**

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*Referring to the solution of the Irish Problem, Lloyd George pointed out that "you cannot cross the abyss with two jumps". The same applies to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Any phased solution, any gradual process has been proved to be not only counter-productive but mostly catastrophic for the prospects of resolving the conflict. The more gradual is the process, the easier it is to be hijacked and eventually destroyed by the extremists on both sides.*

In other words, the prospects of Annapolis Declaration are rather bleak. The declaration itself is a watered down version of the Road Map, whereas its provision for NATO arbitration and evaluation is not far, in its essence, from the Tenet Work Plan and the General Zinni's Joint Goals Proposals, back in March 2002. Both plans failed to break the vicious cycle of violence and to establish a trustful environment in the area. The main reason behind their failure was the absence of incentives as well as counter-incentives for both parties. Neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians have anything tangible to gain or to lose from the international society, in the form of security and independence guarantees or of sanctions and international marginalisation.

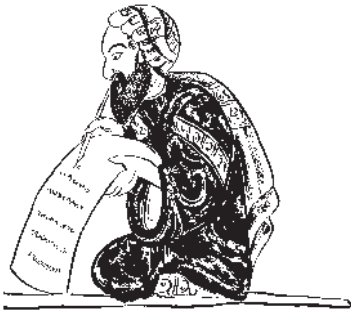
The Annapolis Conference was not prepared to touch upon any of the so-called core-issues; it was not

ready even to name them. It helped neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians to think about working solutions. It simply gave both their governments precious time to sort out their domestic arena. As far as the American administration is concerned, it was a relaxed break from the hell of Iraq. Unlike the administrations of George Bush Sr. and Bill Clinton, the current US foreign policy gave no sign of being capable to offer any substantial help.

Let us now present some preliminary ideas that might be of some help. We shall concentrate on the issues that are the main thorns for those, who genuinely wish to reach a solution: the settlements, the borders of the Palestinian state and Jerusalem. We all know that the water issue had been more or less resolved back in Camp David and that only those who do not wish a solution are insisting on Palestinian refugees' right of return to the State of Israel.

First, about the borders and the settlements. The borders between the State of Israel and the Palestinian State could follow the 1948 line with some minor adjustments. The big populous Israeli settlements (Projection of Abu Mazen-Beilin Plan, March 2001 etc.), which are connected to the borders, will be on lease by Israel for 100 years in the manner of other similar international cases. All other settlements should be demolished and taken out in a period of two-three years.

Second, about Jerusalem. The same lease will be applied to all Israeli settlements, which have been built east of the 1948 line, after Oslo agreements in 1993. Those, which have been built before 1993, will be annexed to State of Israel. The Old City will follow its ancient division into the four Quarters; the Jewish Quarter will be under Israeli sovereignty whereas the Arab Quarters (Christian and Muslim) under Palestinian sovereignty and the Armenian Quarter will chose between the two.



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A trilateral committee of religious authorities will deal with matters that arouse from the proximity of the Holy Places of the three religions. Certainly such ideas need a lot more work in order to be feasible. We hope that at least they took Lloyd George's point and the Peace Process is not in the air. ■

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